BACKGROUNDER NO. 1-0123 FEBRUARY 6, 1976
WILLIAM WADE/LONDON

WESTERN EUROPE ON DETENTE

ANNCR:

WESTERN E UROPEAN POLITICAL LEADERS ARE REASSESSING THE STATE OF EAST-WEST DETENTE, WITH SOME EMPHASIS ON EVENTS IN ANGOLA. VOA CORRESPONDENT WILLIAM WADE, REPORTING FROM LONDON, SUMS UP SOME OF THE REACTIONS:

VOICE:

THE DANISH GOVERNMENT IS UNHAPPY ABOUT THE WAY ROMANIAN AUTHORITIES ARE TREATING DANISH-ROMANIAN MARRIED COUPLES. IN SEVEN CASES, THE DANISH NEWS AGENCY SAYS, THERE HAS BEEN BUREAUCRATIC HARASSMENT -- THE KIND OF THING THE DANES CAMPAIGNED AGAINST IN DRAFTING LAST YEAR'S HELSINKI EAST-WEST AGREEMENT. AND IN NORWAY, FOREIGN MINISTER KNUT FRYDENLUND HAS HAD CRITICAL WORDS ABOUT WHAT HE CALLS CUBA'S "UGLY EXAMPLE OF INTERVENTION" IN ANGOLA. IN PARIS, RENE FOCH, FOREIGN AFFAIRS SPOKESMAN FOR PRESIDENT GISCARD E'ESTAING'S REPUBLICAN INDEPENDENT PARTY, ALSO IS CONCERNED ABOUT ANGOLA. SOVIET INTERVENTION THERE, HE SAID IN A TELEVISION INTERVIEW, "IS REMINISCENT OF NINETEENTH CENTURY IMPERIALISM. IT SHOWS CLEARLY," HE SAID, "THE LIMITS OF THE IDEA OF DETENTE IN THE MINDS OF SOVIET LEADERS."

THIS SORT OF CRITICISM, FROM DIFFERENT SHADES OF POLITICAL OPINION IN WESTERN EUROPE, IS INDICATIVE OF THE LATEST REAPPRAISALS OF THE HELSINKI ACCORD. AT THE SAME TIME, IT IS NOTED HERE THAT THERE HAVE BEEN SOVIET MOVES TO HONOR THE THIRTY-FIVE NATION HELSINKI DOCUMENT. THESE INCLUDE THE SOVIET INVITATION TO THE GREEK AND TURKISH

GOVERNMENTS TO SEND OBSERVERS TO CURRENT SOVIET MILITARY MANEUVERS AND MOSCOW'S DECLARATION OF INTENT TO ALLOW MORE WESTERN NEWSPAPERS TO GO ON SALE IN SOVIET CITIES.

IT IS WIDELY RECOGNIZED IN WESTERN EUROPE, AS INDEED IT WAS AT THE HELSINKI SUMMIT ITSELF, THAT DETENTE IS A PROCESS STILL IN ITS EARLY STAGES, WITH MANY TESTS AHEAD. THERE IS NO DEARTH OF SUGGESTIONS OF HOW RELATIONS CAN BE IMPROVED. HERE IN BRITAIN, THE LABOR GOVERNMENT'S DEFENSE SECRETARY, ROY MASON, SUGGESTS PULLING DOWN THE BERLIN WALL. IN AN INTERVIEW WITH THE LONDON TIMES, MISTER MASON SAID DISMANTLING THE WALL WOULD BE PROOF TO THE WEST OF THE EFFECTIVENESS OF DETENTE. HE ALSO URGED THE WARSAW PACT TO REDUCE ITS TANK ARMIES IN CENTRAL EUROPE AND SUGGESTED THAT MOSCOW MIGHT RELAX ITS POLICIES TOWARD ETHNIC MINORITIES. IN THE HOUSE OF LORDS THE OTHER DAY (FEB. 4,) LORD SHINWELL, A LABOR PARTY ELDER STATESMAN, ASKED WHETHER, IN VIEW OF ANGOLA AND THE SUPPRESSION OF SOVIET DISSIDENTS, THE GOVERNMENT IS SATISFIED THAT MOSCOW IS LIVING UP TO THE HELSINKI AGREEMENT. NO, SAID MINISTER OF STATE LORD GORONWY-ROBERTS, THE BRITISH GOVERNMENT IS NOT SATISFIED. BUT HE ADDED HE HOPES ALL PARTIES TO THE HELSINKI AGREEMENT WILL DO BETTER BY 1977 WHEN THEY MEET AGAIN IN BELGRADE TO REVIEW THE RESULTS OF THEIR WORK.

GH/PBM